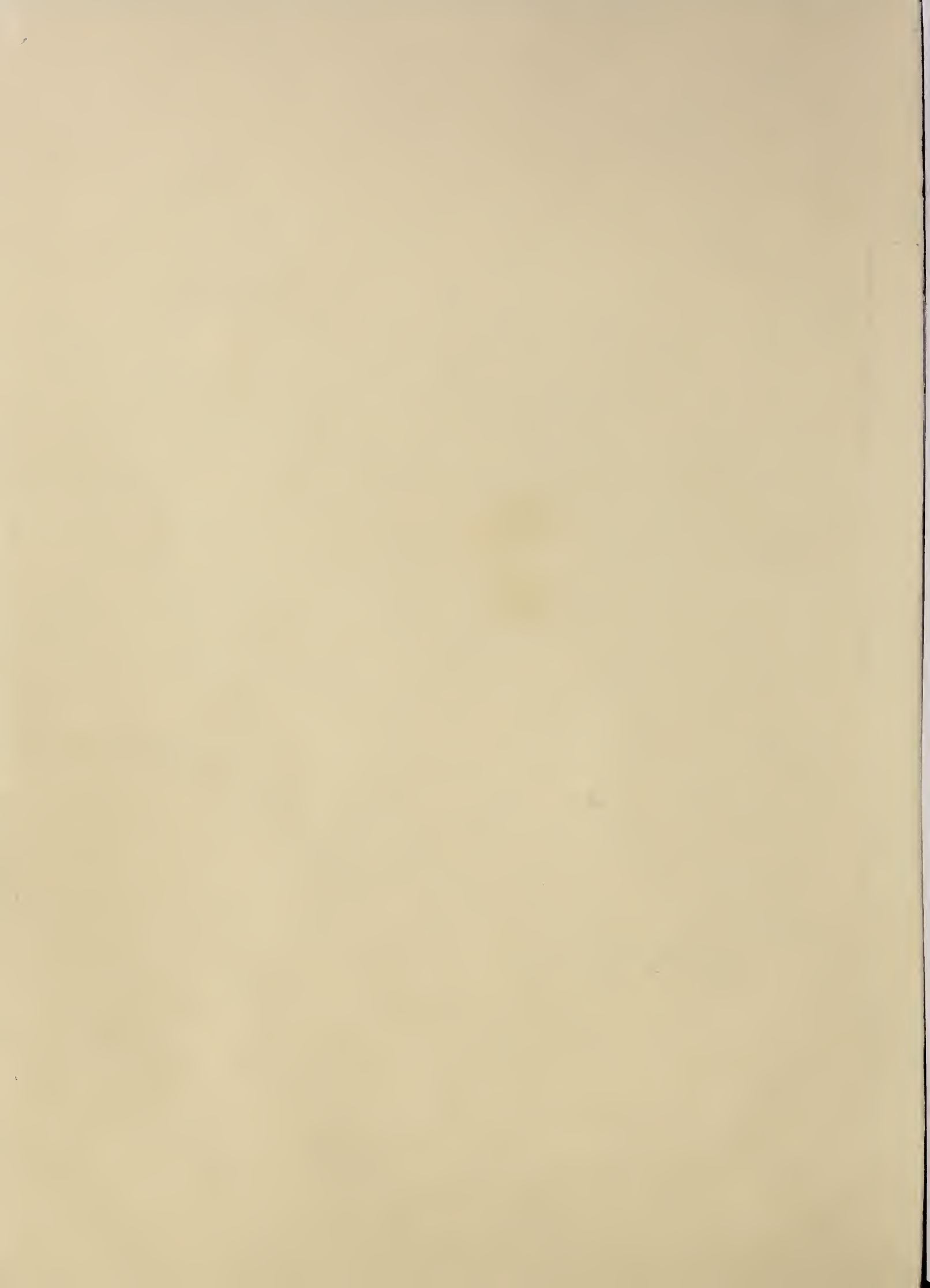


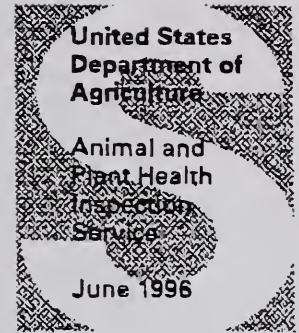
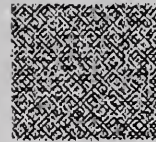
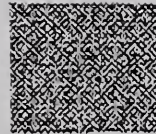
Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



FACTSHEET

Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care



A New Era in Animal Welfare Enforcement

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is committed to improving the care and handling of animals protected under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The law covers certain animals sold as pets at the wholesale level, used in exhibition or research, or transported in commerce.

Companion Animal Care

APHIS held a series of public meetings on the care and treatment of dogs and cats in the commercial pet trade. Held in Kansas City, St. Louis, and Washington, DC, the meetings featured workshops on areas of particular public interest and concern—space, sanitation, and construction requirements for primary enclosures; breeding frequency and veterinary care; and air transport standards. APHIS is compiling the recommendations into regulatory proposals to be published for public comment later this year.

Exhibit Animals

APHIS is increasing its focus on the special needs of elephants and other exotic exhibition animals. The agency is considering changing current regulations to require special education and training for all handlers of these animals.

To enhance inspectors' understanding of these animals' needs, the Agency has renewed its Zoo Animal Internship program, 6 weeks of intensive, hands-on training at facilities representing a cross-section of the exhibition community.

Marine Mammals

APHIS has published proposed regulations governing the care provided to animals involved in Swim-With-the-Dolphins programs. The proposal includes specific training standards for personnel involved in these programs and more specific veterinary care standards to ensure the health and well-being of the animals. A final rule will be published later this year.

The agency has also convened a committee to frame a rulemaking proposal covering care and maintenance standards for marine mammals. Members include experts in marine mammal care and representatives of the animal welfare community, the regulated industry, including both large and small facilities, and affiliated professional organizations. The next session is scheduled for July 8-10. After the committee has completed its work, a proposal will be published for public review and comment. Areas to be covered include space requirements, water quality, noise levels, and facility construction.

Enforcement Efforts

With a field force of 69 inspectors to cover over 13,000 animal venues, APHIS enforces the AWA primarily through unannounced inspections and follow-up. Failure to correct problems and provide adequate care and treatment for animals can result in legal action and other penalties.

Fiscal Year 1995 saw a record total of fines imposed on violators: over \$400,000. By comparison, in FY 1993, a mere \$97,750 in fines was imposed. This was achieved with essentially the same budget and 19 fewer inspectors than in previous years. In many cases, violators have been directed to spend a portion of their fines to improve their animals' care.

New Legislative and Regulatory Initiatives

The agency recently completed an intensive internal review of its animal welfare program and has developed a strategic plan for taking the program into the next century. Under consideration are a legislative proposal to strengthen enforcement authorities under the AWA and a series of regulatory proposals to improve existing systems for animal care.

